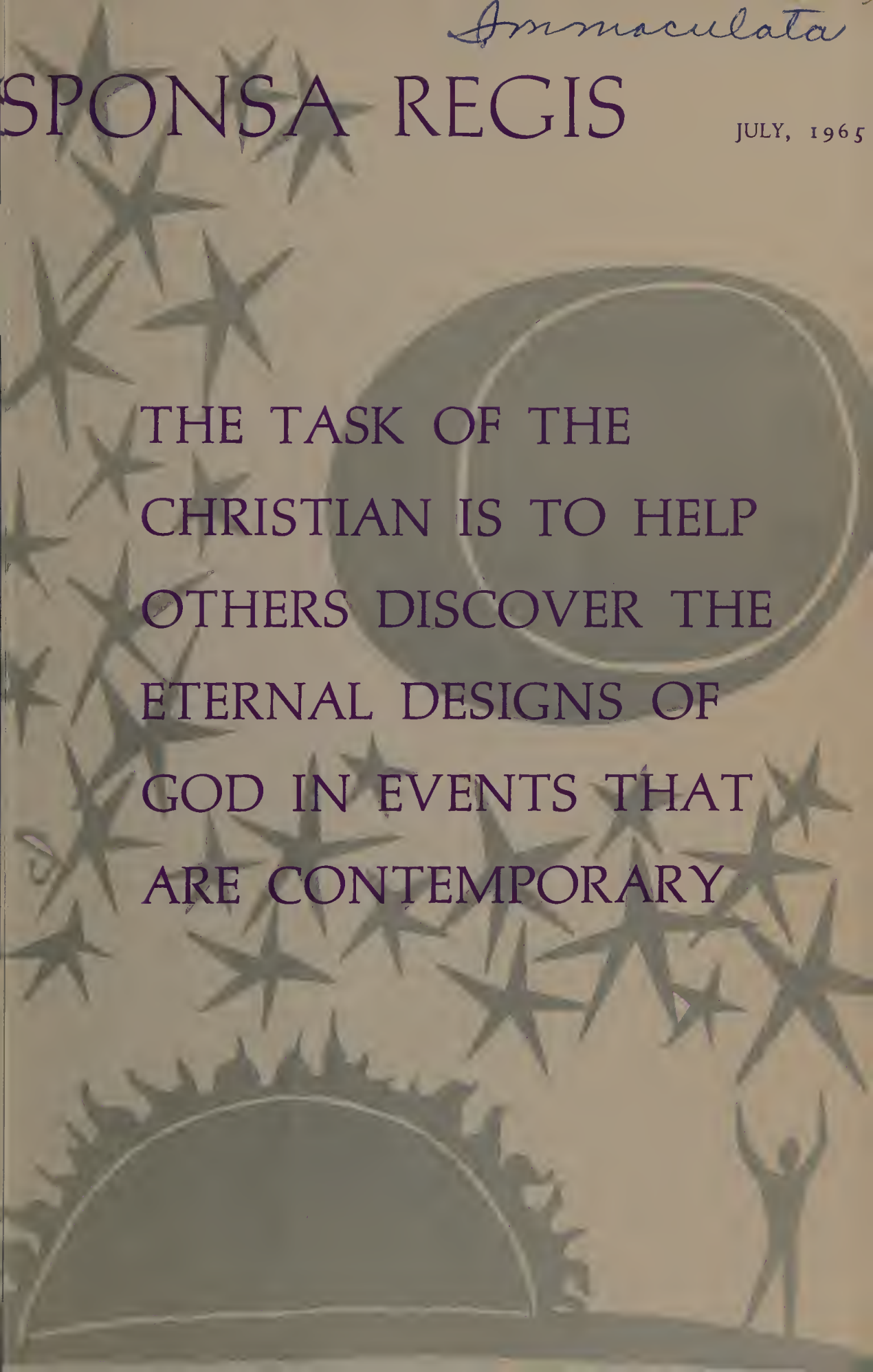
Immaculata

SPONSA REGIS

JULY, 1965

THE TASK OF THE CHRISTIAN IS TO HELP OTHERS DISCOVER THE ETERNAL DESIGNS OF GOD IN EVENTS THAT ARE CONTEMPORARY



SPONSA REGIS

A SPIRITUAL REVIEW FOR SISTERS

JULY 1965 VOLUME 36 NUMBER 11

The Biblical Concept of Vocation 321
CHARLES A. SCHLECK, C.S.C.

The Virgin: Sign of Contemplation 337
THOMAS DUBAY, S.M.

Poem 344
JAMES L. WEIL

Book Reviews 345

NIHIL OBSTAT: Reinold Theisen, O.S.B., *Censor deput.* IMPRIMATUR: ✠ Peter W. Bartholome, D.D., *Episc. Sancti Clodoaldi.*

Published monthly by monks of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. Rev. Ronald Roloff, O.S.B., Editor; Rev. Myron Kasprick, O.S.B., Managing Editor; Rev. Raymond Roseliep, Poetry Editor. Advisory Board: Rev. Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., Sister Ritamary Bradley, C.H.M., Sister M. Rose Emmanuella Brennan, S.N.J.M., Sister M. Emmanuel Collins, O.S.F., Mother Mary Robert Falls, O.S.U., Sister M. Jean Frances Fiffe, O.P., Sister M. Jeremy Hall, O.S.B., Sister M. Jerome Keeler, O.S.B., Sister M. Teresa Francis McDade, B.V.M., Sister Mary Virginia Micka, C.S.J., Sister M. Charles Borromeo Muckerhirn, C.S.C., Sister Mary Emil Penet, I.H.M., Sister Mary James Walsh, S.N.D., Sister Annette Walters, C.S.J., Mother Mary Florence Wolff, S.L., Sister M. Francine Zeller, O.S.F.

Address all correspondence except poetry to Sponsa Regis, Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321 (Checks payable to Sponsa Regis.) Poetry should be sent to Rev. Raymond Roseliep, Loras College, Dubuque, Iowa 52003. 1 year $2.50; 2 years $4.00; single copy 25 cents. Sterling area (except Australia): 1 year 18*s*; 2 years 29*s*; single copy 1*s* 11*d*. Australia: 1 year 23*s*; 2 years 37*s*; single copy 2*s* 3*d*. Agent for India: Asian Trading Corporation, Post Box No. 1505, Bombay-1. Indexed in the *Catholic Periodical Index*. Printed by Sentinel Publishing Company, 413 East Saint Germain Street, Saint Cloud, Minnesota. Second class postage paid at Saint Cloud, Minnesota. (Do not send mail to this address.)

The Biblical Concept of Vocation

CHARLES A. SCHLECK, C.S.C.

If we were to examine Sacred Scripture to determine the nature of a divine vocation to follow Christ, I believe we would come to the following conclusion: a divine vocation to follow Christ is a call to be a witness to and a herald of the Jerusalem-event which we call the paschal mystery. These two elements, witness and herald, are not always found in the same proportion, or with the same visibility in all who are called by God; but they are always present in varying degrees in everyone who receives a divine call. Because of their importance it would be well for us to consider each of these elements separately.

AS HERALDS. As a herald of the Jerusalem-event one who is specially called by God has a mission to disseminate the kerygma, the good news of man's salvation in and through Christ. This, as we know, centered more on a person, the Person of our Lord, than on a doctrine or a cult. The early apostles in their own way attempted to nourish their own faith and to communicate it to others, almost by way of contagion rather than by using any formal proof or logical demonstration. Their aim was to elicit from their associates a response of faith, which was more than just an intellectual assent to some truth of faith. It was a surrender which they were after, a surrender which reached to the deepest depths of their persons, such that from that time on their allegiance would be quickly evident to all who would live with them. As heralds they were obliged to some form of proclamation of the Gospel. This aspect of the nature of a divine vocation is best illustrated in the person of Paul. He considered the proclamation of the Jerusalem-event, of Jesus as the Lord of history, as not merely a privilage but an obligation, a necessary service and true ministry. He considered it almost as a special gift which God gave him for others, instructing them in the things of Christ. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16). Moreover, it was in his preaching of the Gospel, in his being a herald of it, that Paul

himself became ever more fully aware of its deep and profound meaning. For Paul the Gospel was not just a bookish teaching. It was an attempt to communicate a living experience, one which continued to grow until his death.

AS WITNESSES. In addition to being a herald of the Gospel, continuing the work and mission of the Word—to make the Father known and loved—the early apostles had another function, one that gave authenticity to their function of being heralds. That was their mission of being witnesses. They were to give their message life-giving power by witnessing to it in their lives. Just as Christ had been sent as the emissary of the Father, so too were his followers in their turn and in their time to be sent as his emissaries, as emissaries of the Word. And the notion of emissary in the New Testament implies the idea of witness much more than that of herald. Thus the Word of God, the Son of God, was much more than just the Father's messenger. Rather, the Father was revealed in him—the Father's nature, the Father's work, the Father's love, and the Father's will for the salvation of the human race. The activity of the emissary was much more to *witness* to the Father's love than to preach it. The real dignity of the early disciples of the Lord stemmed from their being a witness to God, to God's love in Christ; it stemmed from their continuing within the history of their own lives by grace what Christ was by nature. They were to be the sacrament or presence of Christ, who in turn is the sacrament or presence of Yahweh, who promised to be constantly present in the New Israel, just as he was in the old.

This aspect of a special divine vocation stands out rather clearly in the beloved disciple John. While Paul was preaching the Lordship of Jesus on his journeys, and in so doing learning more about him, John was quietly contemplating the mystery of Christ, reflecting on what he had seen, what he had heard, what he had touched with his own hands (1 Jn. 1:1). Paul and John belonged as it were to different spiritual groups, like two religious belonging to different religious communities. Paul's role was essentially one of herald, proclaimer of the message; John's was essentially one of fidelity and witness to the Word, to what he had seen and experienced, to what he had actually encountered—the eternal Word of life.

If we were to analyze these two aspects of the divine vocation, we would quickly see that the one which God especially wishes from us religious is the second—the function or mission of witness. And this is a far more important mission than the first. In fact, the first presupposes the second, if it is going to have any lasting influence. While it is true that many religious have the work of mercy which we call the educational apostolate—even perhaps, at times during the day, the teaching of the kerygma—still their first and most important act of mercy, the first and most important apostolate that they perform for man and for the Church, is their mission of being a witness, a sacrament, a living existential memorial of the paschal mystery, just as the Mass is a ritual sign, a living existential memorial of the mystery of Calvary. Each religious is meant to be one who has died and has risen, one who has been chosen for a special mission, a public task or service to the Church and to mankind. This is most important. For there was something about the message of Christ that could be grasped, made operative and vital, dynamic and influential, only through an enfleshment, as it were—only through its being made person. And this the religious has become by divine vocation. He is meant to point out in his own life and in others who come to fill the community the profound insight of both Paul and John—that the risen Christ is the point of contact between man and God, that the resurrection of the Lord is the place where the way leading from the Father to man meets with that leading from man to the Father.

Yet the other element of a special divine vocation—to be a herald—is not at all absent. Religious do preach and evangelize; indeed, they were meant to preach and evangelize in a much more eloquent and striking way than those destined for the apostolate of the word. There are times when silence, when alternate presence and absence, when visible signs or symbols are more eloquent than the most powerful spoken word, as can clearly be seen in the person of the Mother of God at the foot of the cross. Fidelity in silence was her mission and apostolate, her mode of evangelization. So often this is the apostolate of the religious in the Church. Nor is it an unusual one according to the testimony of Scripture itself. We know that Christ coming into the world acted either as a catalyst or an inhibitor on his audiences, that by his mere

presence he acted as an instrument of judgment. He forced himself upon the consciences of those who met him, so that they were either for or against him, they either accepted him or rejected him. In fact the very judgment they passed on Christ was one they passed on themselves. We know, however, that the Christian is one who by his sacramental incorporation into the paschal mystery receives this same function or mission, in one way or another. And the more completely he or she is incorporated into this mystery the more does this obligation increase. In the case of the woman this obligation reaches its fullest possible extension in her religious profession. Thus, while it is the mission of every Christian to be a kind of sign of eternity in time, still it is the *public* mission or function of one who has been approved by the Church to specifically exercise this role, as a *public* service to the Church, as a *public* way of life. Thus the mission of the religious is a kind of paradox. He is still going through the paschal mystery, leading the life of faith on the one hand, and yet on the other he has already passed through it entirely—symbolically, spiritually, and intentionally, or by way of personal desire. By profession he has objectively, as far as lies within his power, established himself definitively in eternity like the risen Christ after his resurrection. It is in the religious life that the promised gift of the Spirit is continually manifest, the almost visible outpouring of the Spirit, whose effort in the Church is to act as its heart, bringing all men into unity in Christ.

It is for these reasons that we can say there is a timelessness about the religious woman's vocation and mission in the Church. She is to be a constant sign or type in the world that the last times begotten through Christ's redeeming love have come to man. Consequently, while it is true that she is primarily a witness in her role in the Church, still she is also preacher and herald, proclaiming by her very presence within history, within mankind, God's designs for the entire human race. In fact, these two elements of a special divine vocation can never be separated, not even in the case of contemplative nuns. The very witness they afford to the Church, to all who even lay eyes on their buildings, is a sermon in itself, a testimony, an undying remembrance and memorial of man's ultimate destiny, the transcendent goal of marriage with the Lamb. Religious women are the pledge, the image,

the promise of the communion to come. They are the image of humanity once sinful, freed by Christ from its tortuous grasp, made virginal by his kiss, and made his chaste bride.

The task of the Christian at any point in history is not so much to predict the future as to help others at this point in time discover or be kept aware of the eternal designs of God in events that are contemporary. It is the Christian's mission as witness and herald to recognize behind the events of daily life the dimension which in a sense is proper to God, or properly from God, in them. But it is the mission of one called to the particular vocation of religious life to show more clearly than others that every event of the world which has come upon it since the time of Christ, is an event that pertains not so much to time as to end-time, for all time for a Christian is really Sacred Time.

CONDITIONS OF A SPECIAL DIVINE VOCATION

Sacred Scripture clearly points out that a special divine vocation is surrounded by certain conditions. And it is most necessary, especially today, that religious know what these conditions are, so that they are prepared to accept and embrace them and are prepared to publicly symbolize them in the living out of their vocation. It is only in this way that both religious, and to a certain extent those with whom they are working, can be true to the Christian vocation and mission itself in the face of many opposing factors which spring from ignorance or mediocrity or confusion.

If we were to examine the various books of Sacred Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, we would find that four conditions invariably surround a special divine vocation: (1) detachment; (2) the assurance of divine protection and assistance; (3) generosity or total commitment or total surrender; and (4) a special election.

DETACHMENT

The condition of detachment or renunciation is not a startling one, if we read the texts of Scripture with any amount of reflection. In the very first vocation or election, that of our first parents in the Garden, we find the divine demand for detachment for anyone called to intimacy with the Lord (Gen. 2:16-17). It is indicated in the description of the prohibition against eating the fruit of certain trees. In the vocation of Abraham we are again presented with

the divine demand for detachment and renunciation: "Go out from thy father's house, and from thy country to the land that I shall show thee" (Gen. 12:1). Again, the call of Moses and the Exodus theme also point to the same divine demand (Ex. 3:7ff).

In the New Testament this renunciation is even more strongly insisted on. Indeed there was nothing about which our Lord spoke more frequently—even in the beautiful Gospel of Saint John. For while John more or less telescopes the whole Christian journey, finding and placing the glorification of the Lord in the passion itself, he is not at all unaware of the fact that this mystery in its historical realization in each Christian is made up of both aspects. For the Christian vocation by its very nature demands a continual struggle between two powers: the Prince of Lies and the Spirit of Truth.

Again, if we look at the synoptics we find Christ referring to this condition of detachment, especially in those passages or contexts where there is question of his calling someone to follow him more closely (Mt. 6:25ff; 19:16ff; Mk. 10:17-30; Lk. 18:18-30). This renunciation included many things—family, friends, home, and secular interests. But the one thing that Christ constantly seemed to point out, almost as though he were afraid that it would be forgotten by his followers, was the renunciation of wealth (e.g., Mt. 6:19ff; Lk. 11:2ff; Mk. 11:25). It was only on condition that this complete renunciation of the temporal be present in his followers that they were assured of that possession which was truly eternal, the possession of the kingdom (Mt. 19:28-30).

If we were to ask the reason for Christ's insistence on renunciation and poverty, it may well have been because he foresaw that it would be one of the most difficult practices He could ask of his followers, notwithstanding their good intentions. Perhaps he foresaw that as the world progressed and higher standards of living would prevail, the practice of renunciation might easily lose its clear-cut outlines, and men would find the precise path difficult to follow. The disciple of Christ, in excluding certain news, gossip, sights and sounds of the outside world from his range of interest, would lay himself open to the charge of narrowness and antiquarianism. And this would be all the more true, the more men began to understand the positive values of created things. In our

own day, for example, it is because the positive values of marriage are being more and more deeply investigated and brought to light, that we find the life of virginity and celibacy losing its attraction, even its clarity of purpose, and its position of objective pre-eminence over marriage. And the question is often asked, is it better to use faculties that have been created by God and which can be used in a sanctifying way, or is it better to renounce them, or at least restrict their use in some way.

One who has been specially called by God knows the answer, if he but recalls the words of the Lord. If these voluntary renunciations and restrictions are imposed on oneself for the love of God and one's neighbor, for the sake of the kingdom, and under the impulse of God's grace, then he who makes the renunciation will not be the loser. Far from having a narrowing effect, the resolves which he makes along the lines of detachment and renunciation are meant to widen his horizons. They are meant to enable him to see all things as God himself looks at them, that is, in their right proportion and in their proper relationship with the message, the paschal mystery, man's call to a transcendent destiny. The integral Christian realizes that only the saint, only one who has become filled with the resurrection-life, can use all created things without any fear. In renouncing, to a degree consonant with his place in the Church, the positive interior values of the world, he shows that charity which is superior to the world. This is the public mission of religious. In their visible renunciation of some of the positive values of the world out of obedience to God in accepting their vocation, they show forth the transcendence of the Christian life and the Church, as well as the superior charity of the life of eternity over the life in the world.

By this I do not mean to say that the religious vocation does not imply immanence, or presence in the world, or incarnationalism. No, the peculiar consecration of religious lays upon them both the transcendent and the immanent missions of the Church, and the so-called "active" religious carry out this immanent mission in a way which makes them different from those called to live this total consecration in contemplative institutes, in secular institutes, or as domestic virgins. In fact, it is because "active" religious have this twofold mission or function—to be a sign of the transcendent destiny of the Church and mankind, and to be a sign of

the Church's maternal interest and concern for mankind—that the very structure and living out of their life can beget tension. The ultimate solution to this problem is a once-and-for-all commitment in faith to the peculiar service which each is meant to render to God's people and to the whole of mankind. For them to choose a totally immanent vocation, as do the members of secular institutes and domestic virgins, would be to discard one of the most needed services in the Church today.

THE ASSURANCE OF DIVINE PROTECTION

The second condition that surrounds a special divine vocation is the assurance of the divine protection and of whatever assistance is necessary for the accomplishment of the vocation, an accomplishment which is not to be measured in accordance with human standards or human norms of success. In the Old Testament this element of assurance in regard to God's assistance is indicated in a most striking manner in those instances in which the person called specially by God for some definite purpose attempted to shy away from the call under the pretext of being incapable of performing it (e.g., Moses, Exodus 3:11ff; Jeremiah, 1:6ff; Jonah, 1:3ff). In response, God gave the individual those special gifts needed to perform the mission or office—making the mouth of Isaias like a sharp sword, and giving him a tongue for preaching and teaching.

In the New Testament this assurance is given in many striking ways. To the Mother of God the overshadowing of the Spirit was promised (Lk. 1:35). To the disciples the constant indwelling presence of the Spirit was guaranteed so that they would speak the right word at the right time (Jn. 14:16ff; Mt. 10:19-20). In fact, it would be the Spirit speaking through them. And we can say that the frequent apparitions of our Lord in the midst of his disciples, remaining with them as their companion, was meant to be a reassuring sign of his continual presence against all the assaults of the Prince of Lies opposing their mission. It was in order to make his disciples sure of this protection that our Lord during his farewell discourses made them aware of a new relationship with himself, one which invested them with the title and reality of friend (Jn. 15:15). It was also for this same reason that he promised them that the apostolic prayer which they would offer

to God would never know any limit in regard to its object nor measure in regard to its intensity (Jn. 14:14).

GENEROSITY AND TOTAL COMMITMENT

The third condition surrounding the call of the Lord is that of generosity or magnanimity. We find it already present, at least implicitly, in the first condition mentioned above—that of renunciation. But it goes far beyond the mere negative implications of this term. It is a *positive* consecration to the spreading of the Gospel, a whole-hearted dedication to the office of herald and witness. While it might be sufficient for the ordinary faithful to let their faith shine through the thick veil of the deeds and actions of their daily life, the faith and mission of the one called by God in a special way must be immediately visible to all who would come into contact with him, even though this would be merely by means of sight. For while it is true that the vocation given them marks them out and separates them from the world in a sense (Jn. 15:19), still this very separation, more or less as it may be, is itself a message to the world. It is meant to be a source of energy for the world, a source of faith, hope, and charity. It is a living reminder that we do not have here a lasting dwelling.

If the vocation to intimacy is to be conquering, then the sanctification of the one called, his consecration to the work of the Lord, whether it be active or contemplative or mixed, must be total, that is, one that reflects the totality of the dedication of the Word Incarnate himself. In His case, this total consecration was shown by the desire or willingness to undergo even death for the sake of his mission. What any and every close follower of Christ must expect, according to the Lord's own testimony, is not necessarily the conversion of the world, but rather the hatred of the world. If the world has hated me, it will hate you, and if it has persecuted me it will persecute you (Jn. 15:19ff). These are in a sense necessary to prove the authenticity of the call, just as they were for the mission of Christ. The extreme privations which the disciple of the Lord voluntarily assumes for the service of the Master are meant to make it just that much easier for God to prove by his benevolent protection and assistance that the disciple is engaged in a divine work and not merely a human one. In a sense, the very presence of trials and of hatred or persecution in the lives of

those specially called by God is a sign, the most certain sign of the authenticity of their vocation and mission, of their being really and truly called to intimacy with the Lord. If they are to proclaim the mystery of the self-denial of the cross, then they must live it; otherwise they expose themselves to the opprobrium of being called sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

CALLED BY GOD

The last and most important condition of a special divine vocation is that one be truly called by God. The expressions and illustrations indicating this in the Scriptures are magnificent, in both the Old and New Testaments. The entire Canticle of Canticles is the poetic form and drama of this call and response. The voice of the Beloved has pierced the night, and the one hearing it can no longer forget it. For a moment the Beloved was quite close. Nothing could make his presence doubtful to her who has been awakened by his voice. In memory she can hear this voice unceasingly. But she wants to hear it again, now and always. And so she sets out too—in the night watches, as the book says: "In the night watches as I lay abed, I searched for my heart's love, and searched in vain. Now to stir abroad and traverse the city searching every alley-way and street for him I love so tenderly. But for all my search, I could not find him. I met the watchmen who go the city rounds and asked them whether they had seen my love; then when scarce I had left them, I found him, so tenderly loved. Now that he is mine, I will never leave him, never let him go" (Cant. 3:1-4). In this passage we can see how the echoes of the divine voice have arrested the attention of the bride, how they have created the inescapable nostalgia which drives her to find him again at any cost, fumbling, tripping in the darkness. Each man's conscience, the collective conscience of a people—it matters little what the writer had in mind. He tells us that once the divine voice has been heard, the one called is expected to respond. *Vox dilecti dilectae!* It is the voice of the Beloved calling his bride. God invites her to a departure. And she must part from everything, leave everything just where it is, abandon everything without ever going back on her response. For if she does turn back, who knows whether she will ever hear the voice again?

In this picture we are given merely one expression of Israel's election as a people. In fact, perhaps both the patriarchal covenant and the Sinai covenant were represented in this picture. God had delivered Israel by an act of his gracious mercy and love, and by so doing he had chosen them as his own, had made them his bride and spouse. It was because of this divine election that they were holy, that they were set aside for the service of Yahweh. Thus God's love for Israel was not mere detached benevolence. It included a quality of personal involvement which Hosea described in terms of marital relationship: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her" (Hosea 2:4). "In that day she will call me husband... I will espouse her to myself forever, in justice, in tenderness, in righteousness, and in love" (Hosea 2:16-19 *passim*).

This love was not something due to Israel, but rather quite the reverse. "If Yahweh has chosen you, it is not because you are more numerous than any other nation; for indeed you are less than any other people. No, it is because he has loved you" (Deut. 7:7).

This idea of election as requisite for a special divine vocation stands out even more clearly in the Mother of God, who is called the personification of Israel (cf. Luke's account, 1:28ff). Her grace was singular in the over-all dimensions of God's personal dealings with men. While she was in a sense owed the grace necessary to fulfill her role of Mother of God, still her initial election to this mission was the effect of God's unique and gratuitous love, his special and singular love for her beyond her fellows. "I shall be gracious to whom I shall be gracious, and I shall show mercy to whom I shall show mercy" (Ex. 33:19). And it was an election that expected an answer. There was a moment of silence after the angel had delivered the announcement, a moment of trembling, a moment of weighing the request, of mustering strength and courage, a moment not of hesitation and doubt but rather of election and choice, and of perfect and complete freedom. The answer was not just a "yes" nor "I will" such as is true of one who consents to an invitation or proposal. This would have been a lack of delicacy, as if the matter had not already been settled. She sensed that a vocation like this—from God—was imperative. While it respected her freedom, it somehow or other created some

kind of obligation. For when God utters a call of this nature, he should be followed immediately. It was her response, her *fiat*, which ushered her into the continuing whisper of God's eternally creating *fiat*, making her a kind of master workman in his new world and new creation.

Again, the call of the apostles shows this special selective action of God. "Come follow me, and I shall make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19). "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (Jn. 15:16). "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you" (Jn. 15:9). "Not all can accept this saying, but only those whose hearts have been made large enough for it" (Mt. 19:11).

It is from these vocations and elections as well as from many others scattered throughout the flow of sacred history that we are led to see more clearly and deeply into one of the most humbling of God's truths. No one is said to be better than another unless he shall have received a greater gift from God. And no one is said to have received a greater gift from God than another unless he is said to have been loved by God in a special way, in an intimate and personal sort of way—as the Canticle has it, unless he shall have received the kiss of God's own mouth, unless he shall have been loved by God in a way different from and more excellent than that in which God is said to have loved another. This is the summons that everyone called to the religious vocation receives. It is a divine invitation so much unlike those of the world. It is a call from God, from Christ, to become his body-person, as the wife becomes the body-person of her husband through her marriage promise. It is a call to surrender one's entire being, to reserve the mystery of one's entire person for God, for Christ, as the bride reserves the mystery of her person for her husband. It is because a vocation is a free gift from God, a mark of his special love, that it must be received humbly, with gratitude, without presumption and without pride. And when the voice of God asks a woman to open to his love, the person must not only answer, "Guide me, lead me, teach me how to follow thee," but with the bride of the Canticle she must plead, "Draw me after thee whither thou wilt." With the bride of the Apocalypse she must be dressed, ready to meet her husband, to be clothed with the glory of God (Apoc. 21: 2,11).

Surrender to God totally and entirely, then, seems to be the response which God asks in return for his special election. And how perfectly this should correspond to the desire of feminine nature! To surrender herself wholly to another, to become wholly his property, to love him and be loved by him, to serve him, to understand him and be understood by him, this is the deepest longing and hunger of a woman's heart. Thus the woman's surrender to God, which is the essence of her religious vocation, is symbolic of the only response which one endowed by God with a special divine vocation can possibly give. All that she contributes to the call is the readiness to give herself completely to God's approach. The passive or receptive attitude of the feminine being appears as the decisive and positive element which anyone can contribute in the order of grace and vocation. That is why the *fiat* of Mary and that of the virgin consecrated to Christ is the visible sign or type of humanity's response to God's intent and approach. It is an act of surrender, of personal gift, and therefore an essential expression of womanliness.

From what we have seen in our analysis of this last condition, Scripture in presenting us with any and every divine election indicates that it is the result of God's gratuitous love-activity in man's regard. Sometimes this mission or vocation is made known through a direct address, as for example in the case of Abraham (Gen. 12:1) and Moses (Ex. 3:7ff), sometimes through an indirect address, as was true in the case of Saul (1 Sam. 9:17), David (1 Sam. 16:12), and Mary (Lk. 1:28ff). Sometimes it is made known by way of a command (e.g., Abraham and Moses), and again at other times it is made known by way of a gentle invitation (e.g., Mary). But however it is made, it is the result of a special grace, one that remains mysterious and unfathomable, not subject to tests and measurements of the purely natural order. Thus no priest or religious calls himself or herself to his or her vocation. He or she is a priest or religious only because at one time or another the voice of the beloved was heard in the depths of one's heart, a voice that persistently continued to echo in one's ears.

These would seem to be the unchangeable elements involved in the nature of a divine vocation and its conditions. In every age, among every people, in every culture, one who has received a special divine vocation must always be a witness and a herald.

She must always practice and live visibly Christian detachment and renunciation. She is always promised divine help and protection, if she but learns to ask for it and is faithful to her mission. She must be generous in her response with a generosity that knows no bounds, not even death itself. Indeed it is only in death, real or equivalent (what we sometimes call mystical) that the presence of the Father and his love shines through her person. And lastly, one who is the object of the divine election must be really called by God. She must be the recipient of his special love, a love which he does not show to others.

CONCLUSION

It is most essential that we go back to the Scriptures today in our attempt to understand the Sister's vocation. For when we consider the manner in which divine vocation is set forth therein and compare it with much present day literature on vocations, we often cannot help but feel that there has been a change of emphasis if not of concept in regard to vocation. So often today the emphasis is placed almost if not exclusively on what the Sister is to do, on apostolate and work, rather than on bridal election and sign and renunciation, the taking up of the Lord's cross and the following of him. While it is necessary that religious acquaint the young girl or young woman with what they do, with their apostolates, with the works of charity that they contribute to the community of mankind, still it is also necessary that they bring out clearly the divine elements of this vocation and election. An overemphasis on the apostolic work of a community can easily lead to the entrance of many false vocations which will not persevere in the long run. It is quite possible for young girls or women to enter because of what religious do for mankind, because of the communal and social implications of the teaching or nursing in which the community is engaged, rather than for the sake of perpetually consecrating themselves to God, belonging to him in a unique and personal and exclusive sort of way. And this is most dangerous for perseverance. For what one *does* can never be the primary motive for taking vows or entering the community. It is not what one *does*—in an apostolic context—that distinguishes religious women from others who can do and are doing the same thing, whether that is teaching, nursing, catechetics, or even mis-

sionary work. These things can just as well be done even by those who are married. It is rather what religious *are*, what they *signify*, what they *symbolize*, what they *publicly profess* before the world, that distinguishes them from others in the Church. And that is (1) the call to intimate personal union with God, signified so often in Scripture by the figure of marriage, and (2) the call to a transcendent destiny to which each individual as well as the whole community of mankind is called. If religious do not fulfill this role, then whatever other role or whatever other benefit they may contribute to the life of the Church through their immanence can no longer receive its full meaning, and I think that in the end many of them would not be able to persevere in the vocation to which they are called.

In an age in which the community is the almost exclusive concern of so many, there is a danger that its true sense and meaning will be distorted and misapplied, and that the needs of the person, the individual, will be overlooked, especially that deep-rooted need for personal complementation or fulfillment. An exclusively community approach to the religious vocation, that is, what it contributes to the community of mankind and to the Church, or an *exclusively* apostolic and utilitarian approach tends to obscure its other and perhaps primary meaning—the public personal consecration, and the public or typical personal belonging to God which it implies. And thus it tends to obscure the personal need for completion, for being loved in a unique way. The divine vocation which the religious incarnates must be presented first as the preference of love for a Person, a divine Person, because he has first loved us. There is a Christological and eschatological dimension to virginity that must accompany its ecclesial dimension of apostolic service. Its uniting us with Christ by way of personal fulfillment, and its establishing us in eternity must be emphasized every bit as much as its uniting us to the Church and mankind for service. In fact, these first dimensions are just as ecclesial, just as much a service and apostolate as the particular spiritual or corporal works of mercy proper to the members of the community. If the wife in Christian marriage, according to the image of Saint Paul, is said to become the body-person of her husband, as the Church is the body-person of Christ, then certainly the Christian virgin, who is the visible manifestation and sign of the virgin

Church, is called to be the living existential expression of the body-person of Christ; she is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, and he cherishes her person as himself, for her union with him is nothing other than Christ loving himself.

If these notions are kept in mind, constant reflection on the Scriptures will always prove beneficial, providing us with opportunities for going in and out of the books of salvation history, always able to find fresh sources of nourishment and delight. The reading of revelation will become an encounter, and will succeed in becoming a chance for dialogue. To be a religious is to be an integral Christian within a definite framework of life. It is to respond to the word of Agape by the word of surrender, acceptance, in order to meet God face to face. There is not just need for becoming *auditores Verbi*, those who hear the word, nor even merely of becoming *dilectores Verbi*, those who take delight in the word; there is also need for becoming *factores Verbi*, those who are doers, makers of the word, those who incarnate it in their lives, so that they may live in his mystery and he may continue to live in mystery and sacrament again in them.

There is a rather beautiful series of stanzas which occur in the Spiritual Canticle of Saint John of the Cross. They sum up almost perfectly what the reading of Scripture should mean to one's understanding of and love for his religious vocation:

> In the inner cellar of my Beloved have I drunk. There He gave me His breast. There He taught me a science most delightful. And I gave myself to Him indeed, reserving nothing. There I promised to be His bride. My soul has employed itself and all my possessions in His service. For now my exercise is in loving alone (*Spiritual Canticle*, Stanzas 17-19).

The Virgin: Sign of Contemplation

THOMAS DUBAY, S.M.

> There is no other reward, no greater recompense for the virgin than to contemplate divine reality.[1]

We cannot appreciate sacred virginity as a sign of contemplation except on condition that we first appreciate the basic fact that all men are destined to gaze upon the Lord as their proper destiny. Bricklayers as well as cloistered Carmelites are directed by their Maker to the same beatifying intuition of the Trinity that is the contemplation of eternity. For all men it is true that "this is everlasting life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). Each of us can say, "We see now through a mirror in an obscure manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I have been known" (I Cor. 13:12). Saint John is speaking to all classes, ages, sexes when he teaches that "we are the children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him just as he is" (I John 3:2).

What is true on this score of the contemplation of heaven is true of the contemplation of earth: all men are invited to it. Because the exercise of infused faith, all the way from vocal prayer and discursive meditation to the sublime heights of transforming union, is a developing participation in the contemplation of earth, this latter is likewise the lot of all men, plumbers as well as priests, school girls as well as Sisters. Too long have we allowed our lay people to assume that passive prayer is a select occupation for a select elite. We too easily lose sight of the simple fact that neither the Old nor the New Testament makes any vocational distinctions in posing the loftiest yearnings, the most sublime aspirations, the holiest love as the ideal for all men of all states of life and of both sexes. The layman prays with the priest and the wife with the virgin: "One thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life

[1] Saint Jerome, *Adv. Jovinianum*, I, #13; P.L. 23:231.

that I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord.... Taste and see how good the Lord is.... As the hind longs for the running waters, so my soul longs for you, O God. Athirst is my soul for God, the living God. When shall I go and behold the face of God?.... Only in God be at rest, my soul.... O God, you are my God whom I seek; for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.... Whom else have I in heaven? And when I am with you, the earth delights me not. Though my flesh and my heart waste away, God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.... But for me, to be near God is my good.... My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."[2]

In the new dispensation the Incarnate Word makes no class distinctions when he enunciates the absorbing totality of the great commandment, a contemplative kind of commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind" (Matt. 22:37). And the Apostle sees no problem in admonishing all men and women to pray always, to seek only heavenly things, to rejoice continually in the abiding Trinity: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.... Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on earth.... Rejoice in the Lord always.... Glorify God and bear him in your body."[3]

VIRGINITY AIMED AT CONTEMPLATION

It is in this context that we can begin to appreciate the twenty centuries of Catholic tradition that see so much richness, so much fruitfulness, so much fulfillment in a way of life that at first glance appears to be nothing other than a truncated frustration. It is within this framework that we begin to taste the savor of the insistence so consistent in the Church from the first Paul to the sixth.

"The unmarried woman, and the virgin, *thinks about the things of the Lord,* that she may be holy in body and in spirit.... This I say for your benefit, not to hold you in check, but to promote what is proper, and to make it possible for you *to pray to the Lord without distraction*" (I Cor. 7:34-35). The Church's

[2] Ps. 26:4; 33:9; 41:2-3; 61:6; 62:2; 72:25-26, 28; 83:3.
[3] 1 Thess. 5:16-17; Col. 3:2; Phil. 4:4; 1 Cor. 6:20.

liturgy reflects the same teaching. "This glorious virgin," she sings of Cecilia, "always bore the Gospel of Christ in her breast, nor did she cease day or night from *divine converse and prayer*... and *her heart burned with a heavenly fire.*"[4] Patristic literature dealing with this virginity-contemplation relationship possesses a singular simplicity and charm. Representative of the Greek Fathers are Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria.[5] The former looks upon virginity as a capacity for a divine kind of life, a spiritualizing gazing upon heavenly truth. Says Gregory, "The pursuit of virginity, it seems to me, is an art and a power to lead a more divine life (and Gregory should know—he was married), and it teaches how we who are bound by the bonds of the body may become similar to spiritual beings. The intent and purpose of this life is wholly to preserve the loftiness of the soul from being lowered by the onslaught of pleasures and to keep us who should be contemplating and gazing upon divine and heavenly truth from lapsing into the mere inclinations of the body."[6] It is characteristic of Greek thought to see a value in virginity even aside from the fall and its disordering consequences. Gregory reflects this trait when he sees virginity not only as enhancing the virgin's beauty by enabling her so readily to gaze upon Beauty but also as a reflection of the virginity or integrity of the Trinity. "This is to live for the soul alone," remarks this early giant of mystical theology, "namely, that one insofar as he can should imitate the manner of life of those powers who have no bodies, for these neither marry nor are given in marriage. But this is their intent, purpose and perfect duty: to contemplate the Father of immaculate integrity and as far as imitation is possible to enhance their own beauty by gazing on the Exemplar of beauty itself."[7]

Saint Cyril of Alexandria reflects the common Catholic tradition in its explanation of why perfect purity is so tied to contemplation when he points out that it is a liberation from the heavy and dulling bonds of sexual pleasure. "The human mind

[4] Resp., lesson 2, Matins, feast of Saint Cecilia, November 22.

[5] Saints Methodius, Athanasius and John Chrysostom are likewise prominent easterners on the subject of consecrated virginity.

[6] *De virginitate*, c. 5; P.G. 25:273.

[7] *Ibid.* c. 4; P.G. 25:273. As we shall note in a later article, it is Saint Gregory Nazianzen who goes so far as to call the Trinity the "first virgin."

burdened and immersed in pleasures of the flesh cannot look up to God, nor can it with a steady gaze contemplate His works."[8]

Though they are not the only prominent western writers dealing with sacred virginity,[9] Saints Ambrose and Augustine occupy the first place in the early literature. To appreciate their entire thought one must, of course, read all their main works on virginity. We shall here merely note two of their comments bearing on the contemplative aspect of virginity. Saint Ambrose viewed the virgin's life as penetrated with prayer. "When you begin to seek Him, O virgin, He is present, for it is impossible that He should be absent from those who desire Him.... Pursue Christ in your light, in your holy meditations, in your good works that shine before your Father Who is in heaven. Seek Him at night, seek Him in your cell because He comes at night and knocks at your door. He wishes you to be watching at all times and to find the door of your heart open.... See to it, O virgin, that you diligently devote yourself to prayer."[10] Saint Augustine returns us to the insight that virginity is essentially a freedom to love and contemplate the divine Lover. "If therefore you have declined the nuptials of the sons of men from which you would have begotten sons of men, love Him with your whole heart Who is beautiful beyond the sons of men. You are free, your hearts are untied by the bonds of marriage. Contemplate the beauty of your Lover."[11]

Scholastic thought is of course dominated by the greatest of the schoolmen, the towering figures of Bonaventure and Thomas. Both doctors insist on our relationship. The former is so convinced of the bond between virginity and contemplation that he concludes to virginity as being the highest type of chastity from the fact that it most effectively prepares the soul for contemplation. "That which more perfectly prepares one for the most noble activity is the more praiseworthy. But that which more perfectly prepares one for the act of contemplation, in which is required a lofty purity, is virginity."[12] Saint Thomas takes a lucid and simple position:

[8] "Mens humana carnis voluptatibus degravata ac demersa, ad Deum nequit respicere, nec facta ejus fixo obtutu contemplari." *In Isaiam*, I, orat. 3; P.G. 37:78.

[9] Saints Cyprian, Jerome and Fulgentius are likewise important representatives of Latin thought in this area.

[10] *Exhortatio virginitatis*, cc. 9 and 10; P.L. 16:353, 357.

[11] *De sancta virginitatis*, c. 54: P.L. 40:427-428.

[12] *De perfectione evangelica*, q. 3, a. 3; B.A.C., VI, p. 232.

one embraces virginity simply to enjoy freedom to contemplate God. "For this reason does a holy virginity abstain from all venereal pleasure, that it may more freely be available for divine contemplation."[13]

Pope Pius XII was thoroughly in the streams of Catholic thought when he taught that "it is love for Christ, surely, which prompts the virgin to flee into the shelter of her monastery and to remain there for life to contemplate and to love her heavenly Spouse more easily and without hindrance."[14]

CONTEMPLATION REWARD OF VIRGINITY

If few ordinary mortals would think contemplation of anything is much of a reward for anything, Catholic tradition must be represented by extraordinary men. For their unanimous thought is well reflected in the remark of Saint Jerome: "There is no other reward, no greater recompense for the virgin than to contemplate divine reality." If the ordinary mortal could shake himself into being extraordinary enough to study the theoretical explanations of Saint Thomas and the burning experiences of Saint John of the Cross, he would readily see that the most keenly delightful experience on earth is the enjoyment of loving God in passive prayer. Tracing Thomas' thought or excerpting John's descriptions lies beyond our aim of discussing the sacramentality of virginity, but one simple recollection can suffice to remind us of the basic truth of Jerome's statement.

If man's keenest desire is to be immersed in a perfect love, to love immensely and to be loved immensely in return, surely his highest joy can be had only in the highest love. In a union that is so close that man, clinging to the Lord, "is one spirit with him" (I Cor. 6:17), the virgin gazing upon the loveliness of the Lord is using her highest faculties, intellect and will, in embracing their highest object, limitless Beauty. She is necessarily the happiest person on earth.

It is of course true that the keenest joy for any man or woman, married or virgin, is the contemplation of God, and it is true that contemplation is possible in any state of life. But our point is that

[13] II-II, q. 152, a. 2, c.
[14] *Sacra Virginitas*, *A.A.S.* (1954), 46:167.

a lofty prayer is easier to attain in the virginal state than in the married, and that virginity *as such* is aimed at contemplation. It follows, then, that the virgin's reward as a virgin is this supremely delightful contemplation of Truth. While it is true that she cannot obtain this consummate delight except through the narrow way of purification and detachment explained by Saint John of the Cross, if she does submit generously to this proving by fire, she will find that "there is no other reward, no greater recompense for the virgin than to contemplate divine reality."

VIRGINAL SIGN OF CONTEMPLATION

The Christian virgin stands before the world not primarily as a teacher or nurse or social worker. She stands as visible embodiment of the present and ultimate destiny of all men. She declares to the world the primacy of prayer. She declares that all other human activities—building and baking, working and playing, reading and resting—are all aimed at contemplating the Trinity, imperfectly here by faith, perfectly hereafter by vision. "One thing I ask of the Lord," she declares to the world and in its name, "this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord" (Ps. 26:4).

There are few areas in Catholic theology so seldom explained to the flock of Christ as the ordination of action to contemplation. Most priests and religious know that the latter is to flow out of the former, that contemplation is superior to action, and that a combination of both is superior to either taken singly. But few realize that eating and gardening and plastering and playing and teaching are done for the sake of contemplation. We seem to feel that they are separate departments of human life. Yet theology plainly teaches that the moral virtues are practiced as disposers for the theological.[15] We eat and work that we may be able to converse with God. We teach that others may learn so to order their lives that they too may be able to contemplate God as the sole occupation that is sought for itself. It is the one thing that they too are to ask of the Lord and seek from him. If this were not so, it would be difficult to explain the frequent scriptural admonitions that we pray "day and night," "through the night-

[15] See II-II, q. 104, a. 3c; q. 182, a. 1, ad 2 and a. 4.

watches," "at all times," "all the day," "before dawn," "without ceasing."[16] We would otherwise be hard pressed in explaining how God could direct us to seek rest *only* in him: "only in God be at rest, my soul" (Ps. 61:6). If gazing on God were not the end and purpose of human activity, we would not know how an inspired psalmist could say that he seeks only to gaze on the Lord. The unity of many occupations can come only from their purpose.

PHYSICAL INTEGRITY AND CONTEMPLATION

But there is yet another element in the contemplative sign value of virginity. Saint Paul also says that the virgin "thinks about the things of the Lord that she may be holy in *body* and in spirit." We have considered the spirit; we must now reflect a moment on the body.

The virgin contemplates the Lord that she may be holy in body. Mysterious words. What do they mean? It seems to us that a body may be said to be holy when it is subject to the spirit, just as a spirit is holy when it is subject to God. A body is unholy when it is unruly, when it seeks to follow those tendencies contrary to the dictates of reason, independently of the good of the whole man. A virgin contemplates, then, to place her whole being in a perfect harmony with the Lord: body subject to soul, soul and body subject to God.

We can also view this holiness the other way around. From this point of view the virgin's body is holy insofar as her perfect purity preserves her in calm for the act of contemplation. She is spared the "tribulation of the flesh" attendant on the use of sex (I Cor. 7:28). Her body is pure and peaceful; she gazes easily and joyfully on the loveliness of the Lord.

A consecrated virgin is consequently a witness to the world that contemplation is primary, for she has preserved an entire integrity in the flesh that she may easily give herself totally to the pursuit of God and thus become one in spirit with him (I Cor. 6:17). She is a sign because of all men she most emphatically says by her very being, in its calm purity, "one thing I ask of the Lord; this I seek... that I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord."

[16] See Ps. 1:1-2; 62:7; 118:20,97,147; 1 Thess. 5:17.

THE HOLLOW

for Alice Crane Williams

In the hollow
I watch the branch
droop to drop me

a leaf & I get
the message.
In Rome the Pope

promulgates like
Sunday & decrees
trees. Trees shall

minister me—ful
fill fall, hallow
the hollow.

JAMES L. WEIL

THE AUTHORS

The concept of witness is becoming more significant to all religious, and this month we have two articles which emphasize various aspects of the witness borne by religious women. *Father Charles A. Schleck, C.S.C.*, writes from Holy Cross College in Washington, D.C., and *Father Thomas Dubay, S.M.*, from Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans. Both have contributed to our pages before. Father Schleck's article is a slightly revised version of a talk given at Tarrytown, New York, last fall. Our poet, *Mr. James L. Weil* of New Rochelle, New York, is also known to our readers. He is the author of *The Oboe Player* and *Sorrow's Spy* and edits the magazine, *Elizabeth.*

Book Reviews

MATURITY IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. By John J. Evoy, S.J., and Van F. Christoph, S.J. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1965. Pp. viii, 310. Cloth, $4.95.

Maturity in the Religious Life records in a lapidary style many of the fine insights which have grown out of the very successful seminars for Sisters, conducted by Fathers Evoy and Christoph. The seminars, and the books growing out of them, have had the salutary effect of alerting Sisters to the possibly crippling effects of an exaggerated legalism in their lives. The present volume appears to be an off-the-cuff, popular, more or less surface explanation of Sisters' recurring problems in human relations.

The book contains many strong and important statements, some of which need to be elaborated at a deeper and more penetrating level in the light of theology and Scripture as well as of psychology and sociology. Here is a case in point: "It is always going to be difficult... to encourage independence of the right kind in young religious, because of the conformity required in religious communities. But...it is something that must be seriously striven for in view of the almost unbelievable potential of ultra-conformity to turn out religiously garbed, partially dehumanized persons" (p. 187).

Here is a comparable example: "Your original dedication and commitment when you came into religious life was not made for you by someone else; it was voluntarily made by you. It came from you, and every subsequent action is made by and from you. You cannot make anyone else, in or out of authority, responsible for the proper area of your own being" (p. 187).

There are many excellent and forthright statements such as those quoted above. Yet the pervasive, nineteenth-century "feminine psychology" and an implicit "momism" or "mother-child" model of superior-to-Sister relationship take much of the punch out of them. (It is ironic that the prelate who has done more perhaps than any other to decry "momism" in communities of women has written a foreword to this book!)

A tough-minded frankness makes it possible to write: "My dear Sisters, one of the things I have heard most often condemned in religious women is that they do not tell the truth" (p. 75). It is disappointing, however, to find that this psychologist-sociologist team does not delve into this problem of deceit with the tools of their professional specialities (which they are both highly qualified to do). It is well kown that such undesirable behavior as lying and cheating are related to authoritarian milieux, for instance, in which rewards come from the top and not from one's peers, and where a competitive individualism is fostered at the expense of legitimate corporate goals. In this period of renewal it seems imperative to consider not merely personal moral responsibility (important as this is) but also the ways in which community and institutional adaptations can foster maturity and integrity in Sisters.

The authors wear a number of different hats as they write this book, and the untrained reader may find it difficult to distinguish what is psychological fact or theory from what is just plain moralizing, theology, or personal opinion. It would be comforting to be able to accept as one's own the statement, "I am convinced that there is relatively little malice in the world" (p. 93). But in this era of concentration camps, thought control, double talk and double think, such a naive assertion should be recognized for what it is — wishful thinking. Herein lies a great weakness, not only of the book under discussion, but of humanistic and "Power of Positive Thinking" psychologies in general. Unlike Freud (as, for instance, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*) they make little or no adequate psychological contribution to our understanding of the very real evils which we witness in our personal and communal lives.

Chapter Ten on "Intellectual Maturity" is outstanding, and is perhaps the only one which does not call for some rethinking in the light of Vatican II. It appears to be an afterthought and is not integrated with the earlier sections.

This reviewer doubts that there are many Sisters sufficiently adolescent to accept the statement that "there is one person in the community who can thrill or hurt each of us as no one else can, regardless of age and other considerations, and that one is the superior." And if it were true of the superior — that "It is she, and only she, who lies awake some nights worrying about things important to the community which are going badly" (p. 162) — then we would have to conclude that the Sisters are, as the authors imply, children who leave all cares to the "Mother." (Honestly, Fathers, most Sisters are not like that at all, as you will discover by talking to more Sisters down in the ranks as well as to their superiors.)

Maturity in Religious Life lacks inner consistency and depth. Materials of this kind appear to come through much better in the face-to-face situation of an institute or conference, than they shape up in cold print. It is to be hoped that the next book by this team will be based not only on contacts with more Sisters but also on solid psychological theory.

Sister Annette Walters, C.S.J.
The College of Saint Catherine
Saint Paul, Minnesota

RELIGION AND PERSONALITY PROBLEMS. By Rev. E. F. O'Doherty. Alba House, New York, 1964. Pp. 240. Cloth, $4.95.

In this book Father O'Doherty has republished some of his essays which have appeared in professional journals. Such an omnibus type of book is apt to lack a coherent, unifying principle. It is difficult to assign a cogent title to such a collection. Both these factors contribute to the overall negative reaction to this book. Furthermore, for anyone who has heard Father O'Doherty lecture, this book will be a disappointment. It lacks his sparkle, clarity and scholarship.

Certain chapters have flashes — actually, well-developed passages — of expected brilliance. Particularly appealing are the chapters on adolescence, on the emotional development

of ecclesiastical students, and on brainwashing. Father O'Doherty has a rather novel and helpful presentation of the threefold maturation process that takes place during the adolescent stage of development. There is a sense in these pages, too, of the ways in which the culture of our younger generation differs from that which our older generation experienced. Some practical conclusions with respect to the training of religious are drawn. The chapter on brainwashing is well documented with research references and optimistic in tone.

In general, throughout the book, Father O'Doherty seems to try too hard to maintain, even defend, a sound philosophical position; his psychologial insights seem to suffer thereby. However, most Sisters will find the chapters cited readable and informative. Those who are engaged in teaching and/or training programs can benefit from Father's treatment of adolescent development. Sisters who like to tangle with a philosophical web will perhaps enjoy the other chapters.

Sister M. Andrene Foley, C.S.J.
Regis College
Weston, Massachusetts

LORD, YOUR SERVANT LISTENS. By Marcel Herstens. Translated by Sister M. Innocentia, S.N.J.M. The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1964. Pp. 194. Cloth, $3.95.

Marcel Hertsens might have hinted: Be a Good Listener; instead he preferred to demonstrate what living under quiet inspiration can bring about and how listening (meditation) with consistent concentration can induce action. Here is an invitation to live Christianity with realism and generosity. Father's Table of Contents underlines current liturgical spirit in the Church. There is healthy recognition of an attentive Father (1) whose path (2) we need to follow and whose gifts (3) we learn to acknowledge. As slaves (6) in total submission (4) at his feet (5) and as partakers (7) in his sufferings (8) through mercy, forgiveness, (11) inspiration (10), and love (12), we gradually emerge as new men (9) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The English Abbe proposes a vast, rich pattern of life for those who seek heaven in an arena of frustration and fluctuating circumstances. They "must be different from those not having the faith." For Christians in every vocation, rich, poor, well, infirm, VIP or nonentity, the author considers not so much multiple methods as significant suggestions how to listen lovingly in order to act accordingly as "wayfarers en route home." He alerts readers that "true charity... is able to accept privations out of love for another...loves others more than self...does not ask to be remembered; in it there is something of the very heart of God."

For example: "This mother who is killing herself in her duty...increases charity in the world...this girl, scorning very attractive marriage propositions, dedicating herself body and soul to the care of the sick, the blind, the outcasts, is a witness to the charity Christ brought into the world...this lad who spends the last penny of his savings to buy flowers that will please his sick

mother, radiates Christ's love for all who are weak or suffering."

Such a study of direct dialogue with God conditions faithful servants to the stimulus of mental prayer with consequent responses prompted by scriptural quotations. Fifteen translations of this book certainly indicate an impressive measure of success.

Sister Mary Rosamond, O.P.
Saint Joseph Convent
Belmont, Massachusetts

MEETING CHRIST IN THE SACRAMENTS. By Colman E. O'Neill, O.P. Alba House, New York, 1964. Pp. 371. Cloth, $4.95.

An essential part of the revolution through which the Church is passing presently is that of theology, and in no area is this more striking than in that of the sacraments. Revolutions are times of tension: one tendency is to follow the slogan "Off with the old, on with the new," the other is adherence to the motto, "Let nothing be changed." Sound theology can accept neither of these extremes but it is not always easy for teachers of theology to find works which incorporate the best of both elements, the old and the new, in a balanced presentation. To a very large extent they will find in this book such balance.

Father O'Neill makes no apologies for writing from a Thomistic prejudice for he, like many others, is convinced that if Saint Thomas is properly understood, he has much to say to the modern theologian. That this should be the case is apparent when we think about the implications of the development of doctrine and the prominent place of the greatest of the scholastics in this development. As someone has pointed out recently, we do not start from nothing in each age; we are part of what started when God spoke his final Word in Christ. By the same token, we do not set any particular age—including the thirteenth, sometimes thought of as "the greatest of centuries"—as the limit of man's search for a deeper understanding of the faith. Father O'Neill avoids the latter approach more successfully than many pro-Thomas writers. At the same time, through his incorporation of contemporary biblical and theological findings he bears testimony to the on-going dimension of theology.

The book would seem to have a great usefulness, for personal study and meditation as well as for preparing teachers for their own presentations at various levels. Nor is its purpose limited to the teacher; it is well suited for college and adult students as a summation of sacramental teaching and perhaps could be used by a competent teacher as a text.

Rev. J. Richard Quinn
Saint John's Seminary
Brighton, Massachusetts

CARDINAL NEWMAN'S BEST PLAIN SERMONS. Edited by Vincent Ferrer Blehl, S.J. Foreword by Muriel Spark. Herder and Herder, New York, 1964. Pp. xix, 171. Cloth, $3.95.

It is almost an adventure to read a volume of sermons; few preachers now attempt publication. John Hen-

ry Newman had sufficient cause and assurance for doing so.

To read *Cardinal Newman's Best Plain Sermons* edited by Father Vincent Blehl, S.J., is to feel something of what his hearers felt at St. Mary's, Oxford, for all the sermons, completely orthodox, were preached while Newman was still an Anglican. People flocked to hear Newman and were moved by his zeal, his courage, his deep love of the deep things of God. As with everything he wrote, the sermons have that strength of structure, clarity of expression, and perfection of style so characteristic of the great Englishman.

The sermons in this rather small volume are from Newman's own choice of "best." Their subjects are fundamentals of our belief and are, because of that, eminently suited to the present. As we are turning to fundamentals of doctrine, we are also turning to Scripture. In this aspect, too, the sermons are timely, for besides being rich in scriptural references, they breathe the very spirit of the Bible. Fancy, for example, a contemporary sermon on Balaam! The two on the Ascension have an approach one hears very rarely, and yet it is completely Pauline. Like Saint Paul, like Christ, Newman spoke to all comers — not just the Oxford intelligentsia — and he dared to tell them that so much of their lives spelled external conformity to custom, and that they lacked the genuine following of God's ways *always*, or that they were of those who, knowing that "religion consists of love *and* fear, give to God their fear, and to Mammon their love." He points the way to a "reverent hearing of the truth," so that it may lead to a total living of the way of God's love.

If anyone should be disturbed by occasional very lengthy sentences, it might help to imagine them spoken. They constitute about the only drawback in the book. The result of reading the volume may very well be the feeling of having taken in deep breaths of invigorating fresh air.

Sister M. Aloysia, S.S.N.D.
Mount Mary College
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

THE MASS, SOURCE OF SANCTITY. By Francois Charmot, S.J. Translated by M. Angeline Bouchard. Fides Publishers, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1964. Pp. 349. Cloth, $5.50.
This volume has the solid scholarship, spiritual penetration, devotional ardor, and felicity of expression (even in translation) which those acquainted with other books by Father Charmot would expect and which make his writings so attractive to many readers. Since the original French edition came out in 1959, one finds here no reference to liturgical changes that have occurred in the last few years. But that in no sense makes this book outmoded. It is, in fact, a demonstration of "how old the new!"

The book is not written in the technical language of theology, but in language suited to the average layman. Its purpose is to set forth the spirituality that flows from the Mass—"the superabundant and infinitely precious graces that the immolated body and the shed blood of Jesus Christ bring to our souls."

Quoting copiously from the writings of men and women who have attained sanctity, Father Charmot shows how the saints regarded the eucharistic mystery. In a sense the work is a compilation drawn from many sources, a book for meditation, containing much material for affective prayer. It is not a commentary on the various parts of the Mass considered in ordered sequence but a study of many of the prayer themes that are carried through the entire Mass liturgy — themes of worship, thanksgiving, humility, contrition. The strongest emphasis is on the participation of the faithful in offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Father Charmot makes very clear the substantial identity of the Mass with the sacrifice of Calvary and the infinite efficacy of that sacrifice and its re-enactment. There is a concise and very revealing exposition of the dispositions by which we obtain the fullest fruits of this sacrifice, and one is confronted with the searching question, "In what spirit do we assist at Mass?" (p. 89). The serious reading of this book must deepen one's conviction that true interior participation grows with knowledge and the realization of how we share in the efficacy of the Mass, how we pray with the Church and with Christ, how we receive all "through Christ Our Lord." The relation of Jesus the High Priest to the Father is beautifully, yet simply, delineated, while the action of the Holy Spirit in the Mass is exposed with deep theological insight.

That *Communion* should be the subject of several chapters will surprise no one familiar with Father Charmot's writings. Among the many benefits he points out as deriving from our sharing in the sacrificial banquet are growth in personal and corporate holiness, oneness with Christ and all his members, growth in likeness to Christ immolated yet risen, and continual increase in life-giving spiritual energy. Prayed and lived, this volume would transform both individual and assembly participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Mother Louise Callen, R.S.C.J.
Maryville College of the Sacred Heart
Saint Louis, Missouri

THE TROUBLE WITH CATHOLICS. By Frank Getlein. Helicon, Baltimore, 1964. Pp. 5, 224. Cloth, $4.95.

This "witty" book fails to be humorous not only because the reading audience will feel their sense of truth slightly outraged but also because the author lacks sufficient detachment to avoid bitterness. Throughout, one can feel his mouth turn down.

I confine myself to two comments: some of his complaints are a trifle outdated and nearly all his attempts at humor are based on faulty generalizations. Even though exaggerated, good satire will have a ring of truth about it.

Mr. Getlein informs us that there is a very real clerical "resentment and opposition to social security" (c. 1930's); that the Church wastes her efforts on a "Supply the Demand for the Supply" crusade (c. 1940's); that the Catholic layman "has been asked to assume no responsibility for any part of the

Christian mission"; and that "the whole cuddly-Jesus mentality has been given an immense boost and continues to dominate the practice of religion."

Perhaps there *are* readers somewhere who will find these generalizations funny: the Church's view on sex is responsible for the "attraction to the priesthood of men of homosexual tendencies"; one of the abiding characteristics of clericalism is "a carefully nurtured ignorance of reality"; and finally, "the Church in America, as represented by its most respected voices, treats sport as the most important thing in the world because it believes that sport is the most important thing in the world."

Even if one grants the begged question in the title, Getlein's approach makes no contribution because it neither tickles nor tackles the trouble.

Sister Margaret Cortona, O.P.
Edgewood High School
Madison, Wisconsin

GOD'S ENCOUNTER WITH MAN: A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO PRAYER. By Maurice Nedoncelle. Translated by A. Manson. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1964. Pp. viii, 183. Cloth, $3.95.

This book's three publication names (originally, *Priere humaine, priere divine;* in England: *The Nature and Use of Prayer*) tell something of its character. Father Nedoncelle, himself both philosopher and theologian, is reflecting here on the phenomenon of prayer as part of our common human experience. Employing the personalist idiom of contemporary thought, he shows that the concepts and methods of the soul that turns to God are already present in our movements toward our fellow men. Prayer is, at root, the law that governs personal relationships.

But prayer relationships with our fellows and with God are not identical. In fact, a radical distinction must not be overlooked—that whereas my fellow and I are naturally external to each other and bridge the gap through prayer, "God is not outside me, but I myself am outside him and external to him...."

Only after having provocatively juxtaposed these two situations does the author identify the unique character of Christian prayer. Christian men pray with confidence through a living mediator, the Lord Jesus. For in Christ is found the possibility of authentic, enduring interpersonal relationships: "Created beings enter into communion with their Creator because they have achieved communion among themselves, and they have achieved communion among themselves because they are now in communion with their Redeemer."

The phenomenological methodology and broad reference to world literature and the classics of eastern and western spirituality make this work weighty reading—probably not general fare. But its publication points to our need for relating all that is best in Christian tradition to what is best in our own day. An incarnational spirituality directed toward cooperation in the *consecratio mundi* demands an understanding and intensity of personal holiness correlative with the work at hand. Surely anyone respon-

sible for guiding others to pray well will welcome the new perspective Father Nedoncelle's study affords.

Sister Mary Dennis, O.S.B.
Mount Saint Scholastica
Atchison, Kansas

THE CHURCH'S WORSHIP. By J. D. Crichton. Sheed and Ward, New York, 1964. Pp. x, 246. Cloth, $5.00.

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* is truly a remarkable document—clear, rich, succinct. By this time most Sisters will have read the entire decree. A reading of that liturgical manifesto immediately points out the need for some accompanying commentary on both the doctrinal and practical elements contained in its 130 paragraphs. Father James Crichton, English parish priest, scholar, and editor of the quarterly, *Liturgy*, offers us just that kind of assistance in his volume, *The Church's Worship*.

At each stage of his discussion, the author begins with Father Clifford Howell's translation of a particular chapter in the Conciliar decree and then proceeds to offer rather detailed comments. He manifests an awareness of the best thinking among experts about specific liturgical reforms of the future. His development of the doctrinal portion in each chapter probably will stand as the book's outstanding contribution. References to particular problems and solutions in England hold less value or interest for American readers. Similarly, some of his comments are already out of date. The hierarchy in our own country, for example, have already approved and introduced, as we know, English in the sacraments and funeral rites. Thus his remarks on that subject no longer pertain to the situation at hand.

A bibliography lists many works of merit, but in general these books are not easily available to the average American reader. In addition, the collection of material for further reading is not thorough enough nor the selections current. However, in fairness we must say that this is hardly Father Crichton's fault. The pace of change in the liturgy and publication of relevant material is simply too rapid.

Despite these criticisms, we would still recommend the work as a good aid in deepening our understanding of the *Constitution*.

Rev. Joseph M. Champlin
Immaculate Conception Cathedral
Syracuse, New York

SHORT NOTICES

MOTHER FOR A NEW WORLD: Our Lady of Guadalupe. By Herbert F. Leies, S.M. The Newman Press, Westminster, 1964. Pp. xi, 425. Cloth, $5.95.

The Mother of God appeared in the New World in 1531, yet outside of Mexico this extraordinary event has been largely ignored. This careful study traces the development from the apparitions to the cult in our own time of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whom the popes have proclaimed Empress of the Americas. The author sees the need in these troubled days for a "spiritual" Alliance for Progress that will gather all under the protective mantle of the Mother of the Americas.